IMT Nuremberg Archives

H – 1003

International Court of Justice

H1003-0002

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF TESTIMONY FOR THE DEFENSE OR ORGANIZATIONS, TAKEN BEFORE A COMMISSION APPOINTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 4 OF THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL DATED 13 MARCH 1946.

29 June, 1946.

COMMISSIONER:

Captain Joseph Tubridy.

THE S. S.

(THE COMMISSION CONVENED AT 1000 HOURS.)

JOACHIM RUOFF, a witness, took the stand and testified as follows:

BY THE COMMISSIONER:

Will the witness stand, raise his right hand and repeat after me:

I swear by God, the Almighty and Omniscient, that I will speak the pure truth and will withhold and add nothing.

(The witness repeated the oath.)

Q What is your name?

A Joachim Ruoff.

Q You may sit down.

DR. KOESSEL: The witness, Ruoff, will be questioned concerning the question of the participation of the Waffen SS:

(a) On the running of concentration camps.

(b) Concerning the Einsatzgroups of the Security Police of the SD.

(c) Concerning the partisan activities of Obergruppenfuehrer

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von dem Bach Zelewski.

(d) Also the responsibilities of the Waffen SS and also the activities of the so-called "nominellen" SS members.

DIRECT EXAMINATION.

BY DR. KOESSEL:

Q Witness, when and in what position were you active in the SS leadership office.

A Since May 1, 1942, I was 1-A of the SS Main Leadership August and since August, 1942 I was chief of the leadership group of the Kommandeure office or leading office of the Waffen SS. My rank was that of Colonel of the Waffen SS.

Q Did you in your activities see or have insight into all basic matters that concerned the Waffen SS?

A Yes.

Q Did the SS Main Leadership Office give any orders to the Command posts or to the guarding battallions of the concentration camps?

A No.

Q Did the SS Main Leadership office give any orders to the commanders or to the guarding battallions of the concentration camps concerning the treatment of prisoners?

A No.

Q Did the SS Main Leadership office issue any orders to the command posts or to the guarding battallions of the concentration camps concerning the release of prisoners or orders concerning the killing of prisoners?

A No.

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Q Did the SS Main Leadership office receive any reports concerning activities from the concentration camp commanders or did they receive reports concerning the conditions in these camps?

A No.

Q Did the SS Main Leadership Office have the duty to check the concentration camps?

A No.

Q Did the SS Main Leadership Office have any personnel records concerning the offices which were in the front units of the SS?

A Yes.

Q Did the SS Main Leadership office have any personnel records concerning the offices which were in the training or replacement units of the Waffen SS?

A Yes.

Q Did the SS Main Leadership office have any influence concerning the replacement of offices in the front in the replacement units of the Waffen SS?

A Yes.

Q Did the SS Main Leadership office have any personnel records concerning the command post personnel of the concentration camps?

A No.

Q Did the SS Main Leadership office have any influence concerning the men in the concentration camps, the commandants or his aides?

A No.

Q Did the SS Main Leadership office have any influence on the guarding of units of the concentration camps?

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CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: Which SS do you mean? The Waffen SS?

DR. KOESSEL: Yes.

CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: Please make it clear in your questions that you mean the Waffen SS.

BY DR. KOESSEL:

Q Did the Guard units and the Command personnel of the concentration camps wear the uniform of the Waffen SS during the war?

A The guard units of the concentration camps did wear the uniform of the Waffen SS. I do not know anything about the members of the command posts.

Q How did it come about then that the SS Main Leadership Office and the leadership office of the Waffen SS in the SS Main Leadership office had nothing to do with the guard units and command personnel of the concentration camps?

A Due to the fact that the duties of guarding the concentration camps and duties in the command personnel of concentration camps were not the duties of the Waffen SS, the guard personnel of the concentration camps were only made part of the SS as purely an external measure in order to make it more uniform.

Q Were there also single persons, that is individuals, that wore the uniform of the SS and only belonged to the SS in a purely formal manner, but did not have anytying to do with the work of the Waffen SS? If so, give us some examples.

A It was the higher SS and police leaders, who were active in the anti-partisan activities and in the Prisoner of War system. These men needed a military rank since in carrying out their duties, they at times received some army personnel for their support and aid. The only way that Himmler

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could give these men such a command jurisdiction was to give them a rank in the Waffen SS. Himmler also in order to get around the so-called U.K. regulation, the regulation that a person was absolutely essential and could not be used for front duty, gave these people a rank in the Waffen SS. All the duties that these people had were not the duties of the Waffen SS and that is why the SS Main Leadership office did not have any influence on the activities of these persons. The SS Main Leadership office did not know when any such persons were taken over.

Q Did you say you had an insight into the front and replacement units of the Waffen SS?

A Yes.

Q Would you also know that there was one company each with the various Einsatzgruppens of the SS and Security Police in Russia?

A No, I would not know that.

Q How is that?

A The SS Main Leadership office did not have any insight into the organization of the Reichs Security Office, therefore, I never did find out that there was any Einsatsgruppens of the Security Police and SD in Russia and did not know what their activities were. I did find out in 1943 that in 1941 three or four SS companies were detached and made guard units for certain police staffs. If there were any companies of the Waffen SS in the so-called Einsatzgroups of the Security Police and the SS, then it could have been only these three or four companies. The Main Leadership Office of the SS was never informed of the activities of these companies.

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Q You, therefore, say under oath as I-A of the SS Leadership office and as chief of the SS Leadership office of the Waffen SS that you did not know of the activities of the Einsatzgroups of the Security Police and SD?

A Yes, I did not have any knowledge.

Q Did you ever work on any kind of orders in the SS Main leadership office which ordered the SS to carry out certain crimes against the International rights and rules of warfare and against humanity, as is expressed by the prosecution or did you ever hear of any such orders that even came close to it?

A No.

Q Can you tell me the official reasons or the official rules, according to which members of the Waffen SS were promoted?

A The promotions were carried out under the army service rule 29-A.

Q Did the higher SS and polke leaders have the right to use replacements and front units of the Waffen SS for replacement purposes?

A No.

Q Did they receive permission for that?

A Yes.

Q In what special ~~xxxxx~~ cases?

A The command posts or command troops of the army could transfer certain units of the Waffen SS that were under their command to the person in charge of anti-partisan actions. If the secondary leading higher SS and police leaders declared as partisan areas a section and requested that replacements of the Waffen SS, which were at the time in their area, they could make the request for short terms and they would be used in anti-

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partisan warfare. Such requests were made to the SS Main Leadership office and the SS Main Leadership office turned down the request due to military reasons and in case the higher SS and police leadership did not accept this refusal, then a certain decision had to be made by Himmler personnaly. Himmler did approve some cases and this brought some of these units in anti-partisan warfare.

Q Did the SS Main Leadership office hand over any troops to the commanders of the anti-partisan section for the duration of the war or at least for a long period?

A No.

Q As I understand this, the chief of the anti-partisan section groups could get units of the Waffen SS by way of the army?

A Yes, the army was in complete command of the Waffen SS units, which had been put under its command. The responsible army headquarters could at any time, without the consent of the Waffen SS or Himmler, order some of the SS units to anti-partisan warfare. This did happen very seldom because the headquarters of the army were interested in using the units of the Waffen SS at the front.

Q Did these higher SS and police leaders that had the title General of the Waffen SS, did they have greater power over the Waffen SS units in their area than the other SD and higher police leaders?

A No, there was no authority for ordering SS units connected with the title of the General of the Waffen SS.

Q Did you in your office have any personal connection with commanders of units of the Waffen SS on the front?

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A In the three years I spent in the SS Main Leadership Office no commanders or higher staff officers of the SS units came to me at regular intervals, that is both of the front units and those of the replacement units.

Q Did you during any visits hear anything concerning extermination of parts of the population or of other actions against humanity or against the rules of warfare?

A No.

Q I have no further questions.

CROSS EXAMINATION.

BY MR. ELLWYN JONES:

Q What was the relationship between the SS Main Leadership Office and the Totenkopfverbaende?

A The SS Totenkopfverbaende was an independant unit and they under under the command of the SS Main Leadership office only at the time when they became members of the Waffen SS.

Q Did you yourself visit concentration camps?

A I was once in the concentration camp Oranienburg.

Q When was that?

A That was in 1941 in the first quarter of the year in either February or March.

Q That was shortly before the extermination of Jews, was it not?

A I don't know anything concerning the extermination of Jews.

Q You know nothing about it at all? When did you first hear about the extermination of Jews?

A I heard of the extermination of Jews only after the capitulation.

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Q Are you seriously saying that to the Commissioner?

A Yes.

Q The Waffen SS was used for hanging and shooting people in occupied territory, was it not?

A I don't know anything about that.

Q Do you know Major General Obergruppenfuehrer Juettner of the SS?

A Yes, he was my chief in the SS Main leadership office.

Q That is why I am now surprised that you say you know nothing about the hangings and shootings in occupied territory. Let me read to you a letter written by Juettner on 14 October 1941. It is PS 1942 - U.S. 471. It is addressed to the Reichsfuehrer SS and the subject is "Intermediate report on the civilian state of emergency." The letter reads as follows:

"I deliver the following report regarding the commitment of the Waffen SS in the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia during the civilian state of emergency:

"In the mutual changes, all Battalions of the Waffen SS in the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia will be brought forth for shootings, and relatively for the supervision at hangings.

"Up until now there occured:

| | |
|---|---|
| in Prague: | |
| | 99 shootings |
| | 21 hangings |
| in Bruenn | 54 shootings |
| | 17 hangings |
| Total | 191 executions (including 16 Jews) |

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"A complete report regarding other measures and onthe conduct of the officers, non-coms and men will be made following the termination of the civilian state of emergency."

(THE DOCUMENT IS HANDED TO THE WITNESS)

Q Are you still saying that the Waffen SS had nothing to do with the terrior in the occupied countries?

A I know of this report. These matters, which are described in the report, happened before I entered the SS Main Leadership office. During my duty in the SS Main Leadership office no such actions were ever mentioned to me or brought to my attention and this letter also was never brought to my attention during my years at the SS Leadership Office, also before I became a member or started working in the SS Main Leadership office, I did not hear anything about any such actions.

Q Did you know that it was a fact that units of the Waffen SS were participating in the activities of the Einsatzgroups?

A No.

Q But, there were hundreds of them taking part in these murderous activities of these Einsatzgroups.

A I heard of the existance of these units here in the wing of this prison. During the war, I did not hear the name of Einsatzgroups and I did not know anything about them. I also did not know that any SS men participated

Q Did you know of the activities for instance of Action Group A?

B DR. KOESSEL: I don't think that this question is permissable since the witness says he does not know anything about the Einsatzgroups and therefore cannot say he know anything about that group.

CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: That is what ~~we are~~ he is trying to find out.

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BY MR. ELWYN JONES:

Q You certainly know of the activities of Group A as there were 340 Waffen SS men in it?

A I did not know anything - not the least - nothing about any Einsatzgroups and not about Einsatzgroup A either.

Q Does it surprise you to know that there were 340 Waffen SS men in that group?

A It does not surprise me because I read it in the indictment.

Q Do you know that whenever there was any really brutual or ruthless action to be carred out, especially in the eastern territory, that it was men from the Waffen SS selected for those tasks?

A This idea is completely new to me.

Q The membership of the Waffen SS was a membership of ruthless Nazis, was it not?

A One cannot speak, in my opinion, of the ruthlessness of the men of the Waffen SS. From the reports I had, from the many field commanders, concerning the large number of actions in which Waffen SS men participated, I found out that the SS not only ~~naturally~~ strictly obeyed the international rules of warfare, such as for instance carrying back the wounded prisoners, but they also within the scope of possibility attempted to aid and support the civilian population in the area as far as medical aid, etc. was concerned.

Q Did you ever hear of Himmler's Posen speech in 1943?

A I know that in Posen there was a meeting of higher members of the SS and even though I did not hear any further details about it, I can imagine he held a speech there.

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Q Do you know what he said?

A I only know the excerpts which are mentioned in the indictment.

Q Did you not hear of that important event yourself in 1943 when you were at the headquarters of the Waffen SS?

A I did hear, as I already mentioned, that there was a meeting in Posen and that the Higher SS leaders were there. I personally was not there and I did not hear what the speech was about.

Q Himmler was the indoctrinator of the SS. He was the Reichsfuehrer and the man who indoctrinated the SS, was he not?

A Yes, Himmler as the chief of the SS was the second in command of the SS.

Q And the men of the Waffen SS would follow his teachings to the last. That is one of the things they were taught - to follow ~~xxxx~~ implicit obediance to Himmler, were they not?

A I belong to the SS since 1941 until the capitulation in 1945 and during that time I was never required to blind obedience. I did not consider my duty of obedience at any time greater than that of any soldier. In the education of the employees under my command, I taught them time and time again that their obedience was not to be blind, but should be connected with sensibility.

Q Let me read you what Himmler has to say about blind obedience in his Posen speech. It is Document PS 1919- U.S. Exhibit 170 - Page 6 - Paragraph 2.

"I would like here to state something clearly and unequivocally: It is a matter of course that the little man must obey. It is even more a matter of course that all the senior leaders of the SS, that is, the whole

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corps of Gruppenfuhrer, are a model of blind obedience."

That was taught to the SS, that was one of the basic principles of your existance in the SS, blind obedience to Hitler and Himmler, was it not?

A No, I did not know of anything that. I had a little larger scope of view and I did not know that such blind obedience was required. I have known through the speeches and the decrees that he spoke in a superlative and exaggerated term. In my opinion Himmler had an inferior complex which he tried to hide through a specially exaggerated strong appearance.

Q He had an inferiority complex which made him the greatest murderer in human history, did he not?

A If the actions of Himmler, which I was informed about after the capitulation are connected with his inferiority complex, I do not know.

Q But, you do know that he was the greatest murderer history has ever known, don't you.

A That he was one of the greatest murderers in all times, that I am sure, but I cannot check it as to the number.

Q He and the SS organization under him murdered in cold blood and scientifically millions of human beings?

A That he did that I am sure and there was enough proof of it which was shown to the population of Germany, however, to what extent his organization was involved in this I am not clear today. That some members of the SS did participate in these murders, I have seen through these trials, but how far the organization as such was connected with it, I do not know. I do know that at the time during the war I that had a very large view within the SS Main Leadership office did not know anything about any participation of the

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Waffen SS and from the proof that I have been shown now after the capitulation, concerning the participation of some small units of the Waffen SS in this, I do say that there were only a very tiny part of the Waffen SS and that the organization as such cannot be blamed in this matter.

Q Himmler was the leader of the Waffen SS was he not?

A Yes.

Q He was the model in belief, behaviour and opinion, was he not?

A No, Himmler was even before the war and especially during the war, not accepted or not approved of by a large number of the higher SS leaders whom I knew. The better they knew him, the more they did not agree with him.

Q Did they take any sort of action against him to check the mass killings that he was perpetrating?

A I did not even think about any such thing as I did not know about the mass killings.

Q Was there ever any resistance in the SS against the policies of Himmler and you knew perfectly well what that policy was?

A As I had already stated before, there was some kind of resistance, if only by its decree, concerning Himmler's opinions and some of the orders he issued. I cannot say anything concerning these acts, which you mentioned, as I think you mean the mass killings, about which I did not know.

Q One last matter. Why is it that this formal rank in the Waffen SS was given to certain leading Nazis. What was the purpose of that?

A The reason for this issuing of rank was that the higher SS leaders, or just the SS leaders, which were under the command of Himmler and whose activities were over a very broad area, at times needed military forces. The

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reason for this rank was that in carrying out these military actions concerning which they had received orders, they needed at times military units to aid them and in order to get them they had to be soldiers.

Q Men like Ribbentrop, he was given a rank in the SS, was he not?

A Ribbentrop had a rank in the SS, but not in the Waffen SS. In other words it was not a military rank

Q Who were these additional persons that were given this formal membership in the Waffen SS?

A May I give an example. Schellenberg took over in 1944 the military counter intelligence, which was an office in the OKW and it was a command over military forces. Since he needed a military rank to hold that position, Himmler took the only possible way of giving him such a military rank by making him a brigadier general in the Waffen SS - the SS Main Leadership office, without his having any insight or influence into the work of Schellenberg's office. I want to also point out that a high SS leader attempted very hard to receive such a rank in the Waffen SS since a rank in the Waffen SS gave him considerable prominence and good-will within the German people. That is how Kaltenbrunner, who was a superior to Schellenberg, received a military rank in the Waffen SS. Since the military office of the counter intelligence with Schellenberg as its head were under his command, therefore, this rank of Kaltenbrunner was purely formal but without the leadership of the Waffen SS having kind of influence on Kaltenbrunner. In order to prevent a misunderstanding, I want to point out that Kaltenbrunner received his rank in the Waffen SS shortly before Schellenberg did. The one reason I can see for this is that he probably was not supposed to be hurt by the fact that

H1003-0017

Schillenberg received a rank before he.

Q The Waffen SS was the Nazi elite of the German armed forces, was it not?

A The Waffen SS troops were an elite of the army, but they were not a National Socialistic elite. The things they needed to be of the elite of the National Socialist party in a political way, that was missing and was increased only due to the increase in the Waffen SS during thewar.

Q The young men who were drafted in the Waffen SS were proud to go into this organization, were they not?

A That is without a doubt the case with respect to those men that entered the Waffen SS voluntarily, but these men that were drafted into the SS were very often against being drafted into the Waffen SS. The reason for this was that from the many army reports it was evidence that the Waffen SS always was at the key point of battle. It was very easy reasoning to figure out these units therefore had a much greater percentage of casualties than other army units.

Q And the morale of the Waffen SS was higher than in any other German unit?

A No, I don't say that as the army too had such ~~elite~~ elite units, which were basically formed the same insofar as the selection and volunteering of recruits as the Waffen SS.

A I have not further questions.

CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: Any further questions? Dr. Koessel, do you have any questions?

DR. KOESSEL: No.

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Ruoff.

CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: We are ~~through~~ finished with this witness?

We will have a recess for ten minutes.

(THE COMMISSION RECESSED AT 1130 HOURS.)

The foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the testimony of JOACHIN RUOFF taken on 29 June, 1946.

Alice Mahon
Reporter (Pg. 1 - 17)

CERTIFIED TO: Joseph F Tubridy
Commissioner.

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File

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF TESTIMONY FOR THE DEFENSE OF ORGANIZATIONS, TAKEN BEFORE A COMMISSION APPOINTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 4 OF THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL DATED 13 MARCH L($_.

29 June 1946.

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Captain Joseph Tubridy.

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(THE COMMISSION CONVENED AT 1000 HOURS)

JOACHIM RUOFF, a witness, took the stand and testified as follows:

BY THE COMMISSIONER:

Will the witness stand, raise his right hand and repeat after me:

I swear by God, the Almighty and Omniscient, that I will speak the pure truth and will withhold and add nothing.

(The witness repeated the oath.)

Q What is your name?

A Joachim Ruoff.

Q You may sit down.

DR. KOESSEL: The witness, Ruoff, will be questioned concerning the question of the participation of the Waffen SS?

(a) On the running of the concentration camps.

(b) Concerning the Einsatzgroups of the Security Police of the SD.

(c) Concerning the partisan activities of Obergruppenfuehrer von dem Bach Zelewski.

(d) Also the responsibilities of the Waffen SS and also the activities of the so-called "nominellen" SS members.

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY DR. KOESSEL:

Q Witness, when and in what position were you active in the SS leadership office.

A Since May 1, 1942, I was 1-A of the SS Main Leadership August and since August 1942 I was chief of the leadership group of the Kommandeure office or leading office of the Waffen SS. My rank was that of Colonel of the Waffen SS.

Q Did you in your activities see or have insight into all basic

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matters that concerned the Waffen SS?

A Yes.

Q Did the SS Main Leadership Office give any orders to the Command posts or to the guarding battalions of the concentration camps?

A No.

Q Did the SS Main Leadership office give any orders to the commanders or to the guarding battalions of the concentration camps concerning the treatment of prisoners?

A N o.

Q Did the SS Main Leadership office issue any orders to the command posts or to the guarding battalions of the concentration camps concerning the release of prisoners or orders concerning the killing of prisoners?

A No.

Q Did the SS Main Leadership office receive any reports concerning activities from the concentration camp commanders or did they receive reports concerning the conditions in these camps?

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Q Did the SS Main Leadership Office have the duty to check the concentration camps?

A No.

Q Did the SS Main Leadership Office have any personnel records concerning the offices which were in the front units of the SS?

A Yes.

Q Did the SS Main Leadership office have any personnel records concerning the offices which were in the training or replacement units of the Waffen SS?

A Yes.

Q Did the SS Main Leadership Office have any influence concerning the replacement of offices in the front in the replacement units of the Waffen SS?

A Yes.

Q Did the SS Main Leadership Office have any personnel records concerning the command post personnel of the concentration camps?

A No.

Q Did the SS Main Leadership office have any influence concerning

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the men in the concentration camps, the commandants or his aides?

A No.

Q Did the SS Main Leadership office have any influence on the guardin of units of the concentration camps?

CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: Which SS do you mean? The Waffen SS?

DR. KOESSEL: Yes.

CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: Please make it clear in your question that you mean the Waffen SS.

BY DR. KOESSEL:

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A The guard units of the concentration camps did wear the uniform of the Waffen SS. I do not know anything about the members of the command posts.

Q How did it come about then that the SS Main Leadership Office and the leadership Office of the Waffen [illegible] in the SS Main Leadership office had nothing to do with the guard units and command personnel of the concentration camps?

A Due to the fact that the duties of guarding the concentration camps and duties in the command personnel of concentration camps were not the duties of the Waffen SS, the guard personnel of the concentration camps were only made part of the SS as purely an external measure in order to make it more uniform.

Q Were there also single persons, that is individuals, that wore the uniform of the SS and only belonged to the SS in a purely formal manner, but did not have anything to do with the work of the Waffen SS? If so, give us some examples.

A It was the higher SS and police leaders, who were active in the anti-partisan activities and in the Prisoner of War system. These men needed a military rank since in carrying [illegible] their duties, they at times received some army personnel for their support and aid. The only way that Himmler

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could give these men such a command jurisdiction was to give them a rank in the Waffen SS. Himmler also in order to get around the so-called U.K. regulation, the regulation that a person was absolutely essential and could not be used for front duty, gave these people a rank in the Waffen SS. All the duties that these people had were not the duties of the Waffen SS and that is why the SS Main Leadership office did not have any influence on the activities of these persons. The SS Main Leadership office did not know when any such persons were taken over.

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Q Would you also know that there was one company each with the various Einsatzgruppens of the SS and Security Police in Russia.

A No, I would not know that.

Q How is that?

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Q You, therefore, say under oath as I-A of the SS Leadership office and as chief of the SS Leadership office of the Waffen SS that you did not know of the activities of the Einsatzgroups of the Security Police and SD?

A Yes, I did not have any knowledge.

Q Did you ever work on any kind of orders in the SS Main leadership office which ordered the SS to carry out certain crimes against the International rights and rules of warfare and against humanity, as is expressed by the prosecution or did you ever hear of any such orders that even came close to it?

A No.

H1003 – 0023

Q Can you tell me the official reasons or the official rules, according to which members of the Waffen SS were promoted?

A The promotions were carried out under the army service rule 29-A.

Q Did the higher SS and police leaders have the right to use replacements and front units of the Waffen SS for replacement purposes?

A No.

Q Did they receive permission for that?

A Yes.

Q In what special cases?

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Q Did the SS Main Leadership office hand over any troops to the commanders of the anti-partisan section for the duration of the war or at least for a long period?

A No.

Q As I understand this, the chief of the anti-partisan section groups could get units of the Waffen SS by way of the army?

A Yes, the army was in complete command of the Waffen SS units, which had been put under its command. The responsible army headquarters could at any time without the consent of the Waffen SS or Himmler, order some of the SS units to anti-partisan warfare. This did happen very seldom because the headquarters of the army were interested in using the units of the Waffen SS at the front.

Q Did these higher SS and police leaders that had the title of General of the Waffen SS did they have greater power over the Waffen SS units in their area than the other SD and higher police leaders?

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A No, there was no authority for ordering SS units connected with the title of the General of the Waffen SS.

Q Did you in your office have any personal connection with commanders of units of the Waffen SS on the front?

A In the three years I spent in the SS Main Leadership Office no commanders or higher staff officers of the SS units came to me at regular intervals, that is both of the front units and those of the replacement units.

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A No.

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Q What was the relationship between the SS Main Leadership Office and the Totenkopfverbaende?

A The SS Totenkopfverbaende was an independant unit and they under the command of the SS Main Leadership office only at the time when they became members of the Waffen SS.

Q Did you yourself visit concentration camps?

A I was once in the concentration camp Oranienburg.

Q When was that?

A That was in 1941 in the first quarter of the year in either February or March.

Q That was shortly before the extermination of Jews, was it not?

A I don't know anything concerning the extermination of Jews.

Q You know nothing about it at all? When did you first hear about the extermination of Jews?

A I heard of the extermination of Jews only after the capitulation.

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Q Are you seriously saying that to the Commissioner?

A Yes.

Q The Waffen SS was used for hanging and shooting people in occupied territory, was it not?

A I don't know anything about that.

Q Do you know Major General Obergruppenfuehrer Juettner of the SS?

A Yes, he was my chief in the SS Main leadership office.

Q Thatis why I am now surprised that you say you know nothing about the hangings and shootings in the occupied territory. Let me read to you a letter written by Juettner on 14 October 1941. It is PS 1942- U. S. 471. It is addressed to the Reichsfuehrer SS and the subject is "Intermediate report on the civilian state of emergency". The letter reads as follows:

"I deliver the following report regarding the commitment of the Waffen SS in the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia during the civilian state of emergency:

"In the mutual changes, all Battalions of the Waffen SS in the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia will be brought forth for shootings, and relatively for the supervision at hangings.

"Up until now there occurred:

in Prague:

99 shootings

21 hangings

in Bruenn

54 shootings

17 hangings

Total 191 executions (including 16 Jews)

"A complete report regarding other measures and on the conduct of the officers, non-coms and men will be made following the termination of the civilian state of emefgency."

(The Document is handed to the witness)

Q Are you still saying that the Waffen SS had nothing to do with the terror in the occupied countries?

A I know of this report. These matters, which are described in the report, happened before I entered the SS Main Leadership office. During

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my duty in the SS Main Leadership office no such actions were ever mentioned to me or brought to my attention and this letter also was never brought to my attention during my years at the SS Leadership office, also before I became a member or started working in the SS Main Leadership Office, I did not hear anything about any such actions.

Q Did you know that it was a fact thatunits of the Waffen SS were participating in the activities of the Einsatzgroups?

A No.

Q But, there were hundreds of them taking part in these murderous activities of these Einsatzgroups.

A I heard of the existence ofthese units here in the wing of this prison. During the war, I did not hear the name of Einsatzgroups and I did not know anything about them. I also did not know that any SS men participated.

Q Did you know of the activities for instance of Action Group A?

DR. KOESSEL: I don't think thatthis question is permissible since the witness says he does not know anything about the Einsatzgroups and therefore cannot say he knew anything about that group.

CAPTAIN TURRIDY: That is what he is trying to find out.

BY MR. ELWYN JONES:

Q You certainly know of the activities of Group A as there were 340 Waffen SS men in it?

A I did not know anything - not the least - nothing about any Einsatzgroups and not about Einsatzgroup A either.

Q Does it surprise you to know that there were 340 Waffen SS men in that group?

A It does not surprise me because I read it in the indictment.

Q Do you know that whenever there was any really brutal or ruthless action to be carried out, especially in the eastern territory, that it was men from the Waffen SS selected for those tasks?

A This idea is completely new to me.

Q The membership of the Waffen SS was a membership of ruthless Nazis, was it not?

A One cannot speak, in my opinion, of the ruthlessness of the men

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of the Waffen SS. From the reports I had, from the many field commanders, concerning the large number of actions in which Waffen SS men participated, I found out that the SS not only strictly obeyed the international rules of warfare, such as for instance, carrying back the wounded prisoners, but they also within the scope of possibility attempted to aid and support the civilian population in the area as far as medical aid, etc., was concerned.

Q Did you ever hear of Himmler's Posen speech in 1943?

A I know thatin Posen there was a meeting of higher members of the SS and even though I did not hear any further details about it, I can imagine he held a speech there.

Q Do you know what he said?

A I only know the excerpts which are mentioned in the indictment.

Q Did you not hear of that important event yourself in 1943 when you were at the headquarters of the Waffen SS?

A I did hear, as I already mentioned, that there was a meeting in Posen and that the Higher SS leaders were there. I personally was not there and I did not hear what the speech was about.

Q Himmler was the indoctrinator of the SS. He was the Reichsfuehrer and the man who indoctrinated the SS, was he not?

A Yes, Himmler as the chief of the SS was the second in command of the SS.

Q And the men of the Waffen SS would follow his teachings to the last. That is one of the things they were taught - to follow implicit obedience to Himmler, were they not?

A I belonged to the SS since 1941 until the capitulation in 1945 and during that time I was never required to blind obedience. I did not consider my duty of obedience at any time greater than that of any soldier. In the education of the employees under my command, I taught them time and time again that their obedience wasnot to be blind, but should be connected with sensibility.

Q Let me read you what Himmler has to say about blind obedience in his Posen speech. It is Document PS 1919, U. S. Exhibit 170 - Page 6 - Paragraph 2:

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"I would like here to state something clearly and unequivocally: It is a matter of course that the littleman must obey. It is even more a matter of course that all the senior leaders of the SS, that is, the whole corps of Gruppenfuehrer, are a model of blind obedience."

That was taught to the SS, that was one of the basic principles of your existence in the SS, blind obedience to Hitler and Himmler, was it not?

A No, I did not know anything like that. I had a little larger scope of view and I did not know thatsuch blind obedience was required. I have known through the speeches and the decrees that he spoke in a superlative and exaggerated term. In my opinion Himmler had an inferiority complex which he tried to hide through a specially exaggerated strong appearance.

Q He had an inferiority complex which made him the greatest murderer in human history, did he not?

A If the actions of Himmler, which I was informed about after the capitulation are connected with his inferiority complex, I do not know.

Q But, you do know that he was the greatest murderer history has ever known, don't you?

A That he was one of the greatest murderers of all times, that I am sure, but I cannot check it as to the number.

Q He and the SS organization under him murdered in cold blood and scientifically, millions of human beings?

A That he did that I am sure and there was enough proof of it which was shown to the population of Germany, however, to what extent his organization was involved in this I am not clear today. That some members of the SS did participate in these murders, I have seen through these trials, but how far the organization as such was connected withit, I don't know. I do know that at the time during the war I, that had a very large view within the SS Main Leadership Office did not know anything about any participation of the Waffen SS and fromtheproof that I have been shown now after the capitulation concerning the participation of some small units of the Waffen SS in this, I do say thatthere were only a very tiny part of the Waffen SS and that the organization as such cannot be blamed in this matter.

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Q Himmler was the leader of the Waffen SS was he not?

A Yes.

Q He was the model in belief, behavious and opinion, was he not?

A No. Himmler was even before the war and especially during the war, not accepted or not approved of by a large number of the higherSS leaderswhom I knew. The better they knew him, the more they did not agree with him.

Q Did they take any sort of action against him to check themass killings that he was perpetrating?

A I did not even think about anysuch thing as I did not know about the mass killings.

Q Was there ever any resistance in the SS against the policies of Himmler and you knew perfectly well what the policy was?

A As I had already stated before, there was some kind of resistance if only by its decree, concerning Himmler's opinions and some of the orders he issied. I cannot say anything concerning these acts, which you mentioned, as I think you mean the mass killings, about which I did not know.

Q One last matter. Why is it that this formal rank in the Waffen SS was given to certain leading Nazis. What was the purpose of that?

A The reason for this issuing of rank was that the higher SS leaders, or just the SS leaders, which were under the command of Himmler and whose activities were over a very broad area, at times needed military forces. The reason for this rank was that in carrying out these military actions concerning which they had received orddrs, they needed at times military units to aid them and in order to get them they had to be soldiers.

Q Men like Ribbentrop, he wasgiven a rank in the SS, was he not?

A Ribbentrophad a rank in the SS, but not in the Waffen SS. In other words it was not a military rank.

Q Who were these additional persons that were given this formal membership in the Waffen SS?

A May I give an example. Schellenberg took over in 1944 the military counter intelligence, which was an office in the OKW and it was a command over military forces. Since he needed a military rank to hold thatposition, Himmler took the only possible way of giving him such a military rank by

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making him a brigadier general in the Waffen SS - the SS Main Leadership office, without his having any insight or influence into the work of Schellenberg's office. I want to also point out that a higher SS leader attempted very hard to receive such a rank in the Waffen SS since a rank in the Waffen SS gave him considerable prominence and good-will within the German people. That is how Kaltenbrunner, who was a superior to Schellenberg, received a military rank in the Waffen SS. Since the military office of the counter-intelligence with Schellenberg as its head were under his command, therefore, this rank of Kaltenbrunner was purely formal but without the leadership of the Waffen SS having kind of influence on Kaltenbrunner. In order to prevent a misunderstanding, I want to point out that Kaltenbrunner received his rank in the Waffen SS shortly before Schellenberg did. The one reason I can see for this is that he probably was not supposed to be hurt by the fact that Schellenberg received a rank before he.

Q The Waffen SS was the Nazi elite of the German armed forces, was it not?

A The Waffen SS troops were an elite of the army, but they were not a National Socialistic elite. The things they needed to be of the elite of the National Socialist Party in a political way, that was missing and was increased only due to the increase in the Waffen SS during the war.

Q The young men who were drafted in the Waffen SS were proud to go into this organization, were they not?

A That is without a doubt the case with respect to those men who entered the Waffen SS voluntarily, but these men that were drafted into the SS were very often against being drafted into the Waffen SS. The reason for this was that from the army army reports it was evidence that the Waffen SS was always the key point of battle. It was very easy reasoning to figure out these units therefore had a much greater percentage of casualties than other army units.

Q And the morale of the Waffen SS was higher than in any other German unit?

A No, I don't say that as the army too had such elite units, which were basically formed the same insofar as the selection and volunteering of recruits as the Waffen SS.

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A I have no further questions.

CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: Any further questions? Dr. Koessel, do you have any questions?

DR. KOESSEL: No.

CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: We are finished with this witness? We will have a recess for ten minutes.

(The Commission recessed at 1130 hours)

The foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the testimony of JOACHIN RUOFF taken on 29 June 1946.

Alice Meehan
Reporter

CERTIFIED TO:

Joseph F. Tubridy
Commissioner.

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Amtliche Niederschrift der Zeugenaussagen über angeklagte Organisationen der vom internationalen Militärgerichtshof am 13. März 1946 gemäss Paragraph 4 ernannten Kommission.

Samstag, den 29. Juni 1946 10.00 - 10.40 Uhr

Beauftragter: CAPT. TUBRIDY

Organisation: SS

Der Zeuge Joachim R U O FFF betritt den Verhandlungsraum.

Verhör durch Rechtsanwalt Dr. K Ö S S L und Kreuzverhör durch MR. E L V I N J O N E S .

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VORSITZENDER: Wollen Sie bitte Ihren vollen Namen angeben?

ZEUGE: Joachim R u o f f .

VORSITZENDER: Erheben Sie bitte die rechte Hand und sprechen Si mir diesen Eid nach:

"Ich schwöre bei Gott dem Allmächtigen und Allwissenden, dass ic die reine Wahrheit sagen, nichts verschweigen und nichts hinzuset werde."

(Der Zeuge spricht den Eid nach).

DR. KÖSSL: (SS) Der Zeuge Joachim Ruoff soll gehört werden:

1. Über die Frage der Beteiligung der Waffen-SS.

a) an dem Betrieb der Konzentrationslager,

b) an den Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD,

c) an den Bandenkampf-Verbänden des Obergruppenführers von dem Bach-Zelewski, sowie

2. über die Verantwortlichkeit der Waffen-SS für die Tätigkeit de sogenannten "Nominellen" Waffen-SS-Angehörigen.

F: Herr Zeuge, wann, mit welchem Dienstgrad und in welcher Dienststellung waren Sie im SS-Führungshauptamt tätig?

A: Ich war seit dem 1. Mai 1942 I a des SS-Führungshauptamtes. Seit August 1943 war ich ausserdem Chef der Führungsabteilung des Kommandoamtes der Waffen-SS. Mein Dienstgrad war Oberst der Waffen-SS.

F: Haben Sie in Ihrer Dienststelle Einblick in alle grundsätzlichen Angelegenheiten gehabt, die die Waffen-SS betrafen?

A: Jawohl.

F: Hat das SS-Führungshauptamt an die Kommandanturen oder an di Wachbataillone der Konzentrationslager Ausbildungsbefehle erlasse

A: Nein.

F: Hat das SS-Führungshauptamt an die Kommandanturen oder Wachbataillone der Konzentrationslager Vorschriften über Behandlung d Häftlinge erlassen?

A: Nein.

F: Hat das SS-Führungshauptamt an die Kommandanturen oder an di Wachbataillone der Konzentrationslager Befehle über Entlassung von

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Häftlingen oder zur Tötung von Häftlingen, erlassen?

A: Nein.

F: Hat das SS-Führungshauptamt Tätigkeitsberichte der Konzentrationslager-Kommandanten und Zustandsberichte aus den Lagern erhalten?

A: Nein.

F: Hat das SS-Führungshauptamt das Recht oder die Pflicht gehabt die Konzentrationslager zu überprüfen?

A: Nein.

F: Hat das SS-Führungshauptamt Personalunterlagen über die Offiziere besessen, die in den Ausbildungs= und Ersatzeinheiten der Waffen-SS dienten?

A: Jawohl.

F: Hat das SS-Führungshauptamt Personalunterlagen über die Offiziere besessen, die in den Frontverbänden der Waffen-SS dienten

A: Jawohl.

F: Hat das SS-Führungshauptamt Einfluss gehabt auf die Offiziersstellenbesetzung der Front= und Ersatzeinheiten der Waffen-S

A: Jawohl.

F: Hat das SS-Führungshauptamt Personalunterlagen über das Kommandantur-Personal der Konzentrationslager besessen?

A: Nein.

F: Hat das SS-Führungshauptamt Einfluss gehabt auf die Ernennu eines Konzentrationslager-Kommandanten und seiner Gehilfen?

A: Nein.

F: Hat das SS-Führungshauptamt Einfluss gehabt auf die Wachverbände der Konzentrationslager?

A: Nein.

VORSITZENDER: Welche SS meinen Sie, Waffen-SS? Können Sie bitte in Ihrer Fragestellung vielleicht klar machen, dass Sie die Waffen-SS damit meinen?

DR. KÖSSL: Jawohl.

F: Trugen die Wachverbände und das Kommandanturpersonal der Konzentrationslager im Kriege die Uniform der Waffen-SS?

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A: Die Wachverbände der Konzentrationslager trugen Uniform der Waffen-SS. Von dem Kommandanturpersonal weiss ich es nicht.

F: Wie kam es dann, dass das SS-Führungshauptamt und das Kommandoamt der Waffen-SS trotzdem nichts mit den Wachverbänden und mit dem Kommandanturpersonal der Konzentrationslager zu tun hatte

A: Die Aufgabe der Wachverbände der Konzentrationslager und di Aufgabe des Kommandanturpersonals der Konzentrationslager war ke Aufgabe der Waffen-SS.

Die Wachverbände der Konzentrationslager waren der Waffen-SS nur rein äusserlich und aus Zweckmässigkeitsgründen angeschlossen.

F: Gab es auch Einzelpersonen, die nur äusserlich zur Waffen-SS gehörten, aber keine Aufgaben der Waffen-SS wahrnahmen und können Sie Beispiele dafür nennen?

A: Jawohl, diejenigen höheren SS= und Polizeiführer, die Aufgaben in der Partisanenbekämpfung und im Kriegsgefangenenwesen hatten.

Sie bedurften zur Lösung dieser Aufgabe eines militärischen Range weil ihnen im Rahmen dieser Aufgabe Heeresverbände bezw. Dienststellen unterstellt waren.

Die einzige Möglichkeit im Befehlsbereich Himmlers, diesen Personen einen militärischen Rang zu verleihen war die, ihnen einen Rang der Waffen-SS zu geben. Ausserdem hat Himmler zur Umgehung der UK-Stellung (U.K. heisst "unabkömmlich", d. h. Befreiung vom Frontdienst) Personen, die er in seinen Befehlsbereich verwenden wollte, einen Rang in der Waffen-SS verliehen.

Alle die Aufgaben, die diese Personen hatten, waren keine Aufgaben der Waffen-SS. Deshalb hatte das SS-Führungshauptamt auch keinen Einfluss auf deren Tätigkeit.

Das SS-Führungshauptamt blieb normalerweise überhaupt in Unkenntnis von der Übernahme dieser Personen.

F: Sagten Sie, dass Sie Einblick in die Front= und Ersatzeinheiten der Waffen-SS hatten?

A: Jawohl.

F: Damit mussten Sie auch wissen, dass sich je eine Kompanie

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Waffen-SS bei den drei oder vier Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD in Russland befand. Ist das richtig?

A: Nein, das wusste ich nicht.

F: Wie kommt das?

A: Das SS-Führungshauptamt hatte keinen Einblick in die Tätigkeit des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes. Mir ist deshalb nie klar geworden, dass es überhaupt Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD gab und welche ihre Tätigkeit war. Ich wusste, und a habe ich das im Jahre 1943 erfahren, dass 1941 drei oder vier Kompanien der Waffen-SS zum militärischen Schutz von Polizeistäben abgegeben worden waren.

Wenn in den Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, Waffen-SS war, dann kann es sich nur um diese drei oder vier Kompanien gehandelt haben.

Der Missbrauch, der mit diesen Kompanien der Waffen-SS getrieben wurde, ist nur dadurch möglich geworden, dass das SS-Führungshauptamt von der tatsächlichen Tätigkeit dieser Kompanien in völliger Unkenntnis blieb.

F: Sie sagen also unter Eid, dass Sie als I a des SS-Führungshauptamtes und Chef der Führungsabteilung des Kommandoamtes der Waffen-SS von den Aufgaben und der Tätigkeit der Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD keine Kenntnis hatten?

A: Jawohl, ich hatte keine Kenntnis.

F: Haben Sie im SS-Führungshauptamt jemals Anweisungen bearbeitet, die speziell der Waffen-SS Verbrechen gegen das Internationale Kriegsrecht oder gegen die Menschlichkeit im Sinne der Anklage befahlen oder auch nur nahe legten?

A: Nein.

F: Können Sie mir aufgrund amtlicher Kenntnis sagen, nach welchen Bestimmungen die Beförderungen in der Waffen-SS erfolgten?

A: Die Beförderungen erfolgten aufgrund der Heeresdienstvorschrift 29 a.

F: Hatten Die Höheren SS= und Polizeiführer das Recht, Ersatz- und Fronteinheiten der Waffen-SS für ihre Zwecke einzusetzen?

A: Nein.

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F: Konnten sie die Genehmigung hierzu erhalten?

A: Jawohl.

F: Welche besonderen Fälle waren das?

A: Erstens konnten die Kommandostellen des Heeres an der Front, die ihnen unterstellen Truppenteile der Waffen-SS den mit der Führung der Partisanenbekämpfung Beauftragten zur Verfügung stellen. Zweitens konnten die Höheren SS= und Polizeiführer, deren Territorien zu Partisanenkampfgebieten erklärt waren, also Einheiten der Waffen-SS, die in diesen Gebieten lagen, zum vorübergehenden kurzfristigen Einsatz im Partisanenkampf beim SS-Führungshauptamt anfordern.
Da das SS-Führungshauptamt derartige Anträge aus militärischen Grü den ablehnte, musste, wenn die Höheren SS= und Polizeiführer nicht aufgrund dieser Ablehnung verzichteten, immer eine Entscheidung Himmlers herbeigeführt werden.
Himmler hat in einzelnen Fällen derartige, kurzfristige Einsätze genehmigt.

F: Hat das SS-Führungshauptamt dem Chef der Bandenkampfverbände Trupen auf Kriegsdauer oder wenigstens auf längere Zeit zur Verfügung gestellt?

A: Nein.

F: Wenn ich Sie recht verstanden habe konnte der Chef der Bandenkampfverbände auch auf den Weg über das Heer zu den Truppenverbänden der Waffen-SS gelangen?

A: Jawohl, das Heer verfügte über die ihm unterstellten Truppenteile der Waffen-SS im Einsatz vollständig. Die entsprechende Kommandostelle des Heeres konnte ohne irgendeinen Einfluss des SS-Führungshauptamtes oder Himmlers jederzeit befehlen, dass, die ihm unterstellten Truppenteile der Waffen-SS, im Partisanenkampf eingesetzt würden. Ein solcher Einsatz war aber sehr selten, weil alle Kommandostellen des Heeres allergrössten Wert darauf legten, die Einheiten der Waffen-SS an der Front zur Verfügung zu haben.

F: Hatten jene Höheren SS= und Polizeiführer, die den Titel, "General der Waffen-SS hatten", ein grösseres Recht über Einheiten

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der Waffen-SS ihres Gebietes, als die sonstigen Höheren SS= und Polizeiführer?

A: Nein, mit dem Titel eines Generals der Waffen-SS waren noch keinerlei Befehlsbefugnisse gegenüber der Waffen-SS verbunden.

F: Hatten Sie in Ihrer Dienststelle persönliche Berührung mit Befehlshaber und Kommandeuren der Fronteinheiten der Waffen-SS?

A: In den drei Jahren, die ich im SS-Führungshauptamt Dienst tat, sind nahezu alle Befehlshaber und Höhere Kommandeure der Waffen-SS, sowie die höheren Offiziere der Stäbe, in unregelmässigen Zeitabständen immer wieder bei mir gewesen und zwar sowohl der Front, wie der Ersatzgruppenteil.

F: Haben Sie dabei irgendwann von Ausrottungen von Bevölkerungsteilen oder von sonstigen Verstössen gegen die Menschlichkeit oder die Kriegsgesetze erfahren?

A: Nein.

DR. KÖSSL: Danke, ich habe keine Frage mehr.

MR. ELVIN JONES: Was war das Verhältnis zwischen dem SS-Führungshauptamt und den SS-Totenkopfverbänden?

A: Die SS-Totenkopfverbände waren eine selbstständige Einheit und unterstanden dem SS-Führungshauptamt erst mit dem Zeitpunkt ihrer Eingliederung in die Waffen-SS.

F: Haben Sie selbst Konzentrationslager besucht?

A: Ich bin einmal in dem Konzentrationslager Oranienburg gewesen.

F: Wann war das?

A: Das war im Jahre 1941 und zwar im ersten Vierteljahr, Februar oder März.

F: Das war, kurz bevor die Ausrottung der Juden anfing?

A: Mir ist über die Ausrottung der Juden nichts bekannt gewesen.

F: Wann haben Sie zum ersten Male von der Ausrottung der Juden gehört?

A: Von der Ausrottung der Juden habe ich zum ersten Male nach der Kapitulation gehört.

F: Sagen Sie das allen Ernstes?

A: Jawohl.

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F: Die Waffen-SS wurde doch dazu gebraucht, um Leute im besetzten Gebiete zu erschiessen und zu erhängen?

A: Davon ist mir nichts bekannt.

F: Kennen Sie SS-Generalleutnant Jüttner der Waffen-SS?

A: Jawohl, das war mein Chef im SS-Führungshauptamt.

F: Deswegen bin ich so überrascht wenn Sie sagen, dass die SS mit der Erschiessung und Erhängung von Personen in den besetzten Gebieten nichts zu tun gehabt hat. Ich möchte Ihnen jetzt einen Brief vorlegen, der von Jüttner geschrieben worden ist am 14. Oktober 1941. Es ist Dokument 1972-PS, USA 479. Er ist an den Reichsführer SS geschrieben und betrifft einen Bericht über den gegenwärtigen Stand des zivilen Ausnahmezustandes.
Ich zitiere: "Über den Einsatz der Waffen-SS im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren anlässlich des zivilen Ausnahmezustandes erstatte ich folgenden Zwischenbericht: Zu Erschiessungen bezw. zur Aufsichtführung bei Erhängen werden im gegenseitigen Wechsel sämtliche Bataillone der Waffen-SS im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren herangezogen. Es fanden bisher statt: in Prag 99 Erschiessungen, 21 Erhängungen, in Brünn 54 Erschiessungen, 17 Erhängugen, insgesamt 191 Hinrichtungen (hiervon 16 Juden). Ein ausführlicher Bericht über sonstige Massnahmen und über das Verhalten der Führer, Unterführer und Männer folgt nach Beendigung des zivilen Ausnahmezustandes."

Wollen Sie sagen, dass die Waffen-SS nichts mit dem Terror in den besetzten Gebieten zu tun hatte?

A: Mir ist dieser Bericht aus der Anklageschrift bekannt. Die Vorgänge, die in dem Bericht geschildert worden sind, haben sich vor meiner Dienstzeit im SS-Führungshauptamt abgespielt. In meiner ganzen Dienstzeit im SS-Führungshauptamt sind diese Vorgänge mir gegenüber in keiner Form erwähnt worden. Ich habe auch dieses Schriftstück in dieser Dienstzeit nicht zu Gesicht bekommen. Auch vor meiner Dienstzeit im SS-Führungshauptamt habe ich über diese Vorfälle nicht das Geringste erfahren.

F: Wissen Sie, dass in Wirklichkeit Gruppen der Waffen-SS an Aktionen der Einsatzgruppen teilgenommen haben?

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A: Nein.

F: Sie wissen doch, dass Hunderte von SS-Leuten an diesem mörderischen Verfahren der Einsatzgruppen teilgenommen haben?

A: Ich habe erst jetzt und zwar aus der Anklageschrift davon gehört, aber vor der Kapitulation war mir, wie ich schon sagte, der Begriff Einsatzgruppe der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD unbekannt und naturgemäss ebenso, dass die Waffen-SS an diesen Einsatzgruppe beteiligt war.

F: Wussten Sie z. B. von der Aktivität der Einsatzgruppe A?

DR. KÖSSL: Ich glaube, dass diese Frage nicht mehr zulässig ist. Nachdem der Zeuge schon gesagt hat, dass er von den Einsatzgruppen nichts wisse, kann er auch von der Einsatzgruppe A nichts wissen.

CAPT. TUBRIDY: Ich sage, dass die Anklage das Recht hat, den Zeugen zu prüfen.

Fortsetzung des Kreuzverhörs!

F: Erinnern Sie sich einmal ganz genau. Sie haben doch ganz bestimmt gewusst von der Einsatzgruppe A; denn in ihr waren 340 SS-Männer?

A: Ich wusste nichts, nicht das Geringste überhaupt, nichts von den Einsatzgruppen, auch nichts von einer Einsatzgruppe A.

F: Überrascht es Sie nicht, wenn Sie hören, dass 340 SS-Männer in dieser Einsatzgruppe waren?

A: Das überrascht mich jetzt nicht, weil ich das in der Anklageschrift gelesen habe.

F: Ist es nicht so, dass immer, wenn eine besonders brutale Aktion besonders im Osten ausgeführt werden musste, es Leute der Waffen-SS waren, die dazu bestimmt wurden?

A: Diese Auffassung ist mir völlig neu.

F: Die Mitglieder der Waffen-SS waren doch unbarmherzige Nationalsozialisten? Ist das nicht wahr?

A: Nein. Von Unbarmherzigkeit kann in Zusammenhang mit dem Einsatz der Truppen der Waffen-SS meiner Auffassung nach nicht die Rede sein. Denn in der Fülle von Einsätzen der Waffen-SS an der Front, die mir bekannt sind, hat sich die Truppe, wie ich aus sehr

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vielen Schilderungen der Kommandeure weiss, nicht nur nach den internationalen Vereinbarungen der verwundeten Gegner angenommen, sondern es darüber hinaus auch als eine Selbstverständlichkeit angesehen, der Bevölkerung auch ärztliche Hilfe und sonstige Unterstützung im Rahmen der Möglichkeiten zukommen zu lassen.

F: Haben Sie je von Himmlers Posener Rede gehört im Jahre 1943?

A: Ich wusste, dass in Posen eine Tagung hoher SS-Führer unter der Leitung von Himmler stattgefunden hat, und wenn ich auch darüber nichts an Einzelheiten gehört habe, war es mir doch klar, dass er dort eine Rede gehalten hat.

F: Wissen Sie, was er gesagt hat?

A: Ich kenne nur die Auszüge, die in der Anklageschrift veröffentlicht sind.

F: Haben Sie, als Sie im Hauptquartier der Waffen-SS waren, nicht selbst von diesem Anlass gehört?

A: Dass in Posen eine Versammlung war, sagte ich schon, und dass hohe SS-Führer dort waren. Ich selbst war nicht dort und habe auch nichts darüber gehört, was dort gesprochen wurde.

F: Himmler war doch die Personifikation der Doktrinen der SS, die leitende Person der SS als Reichsführer der SS? Nicht wahr?

A: Himmler war als Reichsführer SS der zweithöchste Vorgesetzte der SS.

F: Und die Männer der Waffen-SS haben die Befehle Himmlers blind befolgt? Das war doch einer der wichtigsten Grundsätze der SS, dass die Leute den Befehlen vollkommen gefolgt haben?

A: Ich habe seit 1931 der SS angehört bis zur Kapitulation. In dieser ganzen Zeit ist niemals an mich die Forderung zu blindem Gehorsam gestellt worden. Ich habe mich nie zu einer schärferen Form von Gehorsam verpflichtet gefühlt, als sie jeder Soldat zur Pflicht hat. Ich habe in der Erziehung der mir unterstellten Angehörigen der Waffen-SS geradezu gefordert, dass der Gehorsam nicht irgendwie blind sein dürfe, sondern mit Vernunft verbunden.

F: Ich möchte Ihnen vorlesen, was Himmler in dieser Rede gesagt hat über den blinden Gehorsam. Es ist PS-1919, US 170, Seite 6, Abschnitt 2:

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"Ich möchte hier etwas klar und eindeutig aussprechen: dass der kleine Mann gehorchen muss, ist selbstverständlich. Noch selbstverständlicher ist es, dass alle hohen Führer der SS, also das ganze Gruppenführerkorps Vorbild des bedingungslosen Gehorsams sind."

Das wurde doch jedem Mitglied der SS gelehrt? Das war doch eines der Grundprinzipien der Mitglieder der SS: Blinder Gehorsam zu Himmler und Hitler?

A: Nein, mir ist das nicht bekannt und ich habe einen sehr grossen Gesichtskreis gehabt, dass blinder Gehorsam gefordert wurde. Mir ist aus vielen Äusserungen und dienstlichen Entscheidungen Himmlers bekannt, dass er es sehr liebte, in Superlativen und Über-Übertreibungen zu sprechen. Er hatte nach der Auffassung, die ich gewonnen habe, Minderwertigkeitskomplexe und versuchte diese durch eine übertriebene, forsche Art des Auftretens zu verbergen.

F: Er hatte den Minderwertigkeitskomplex, der ihn zum grössten Mörder aller Zeiten machte? Nicht wahr?

A: Ob diese Taten Himmlers, die mir nach der Kapitulation bekannt geworden sind, massgebend mit seinem Minderwertigkeitskomplex zusammenhängen, kann ich nicht beurteilen.

F: Aber Sie wissen doch und Sie wissen es jetzt, dass Himmler der grösste Mörder aller Zeiten war?

A: Dass er einer der grössten Mörder aller Zeiten war, das steht für mich fest. Rein zahlenmässig kann ich das nicht überprüfen.

F: Er und die SS ermordeten kaltblütig und nach genauen Plänen Millionen und Millionen von Menschen?

A: Dass er das tat, ist mir klar; denn dafür hat das deutsche Volk nach der Kapitulation genügend Beweise erhalten. Inwieweit die Organisation der SS daran beteiligt war, das ist mir heute noch weitgehend unklar. Dass einzelne Angehörige der SS daran beteiligt waren, das ist mir aus dem Verlauf dieses Prozesses hier bekannt. Aber die Organisation im Ganzen kann meiner Auffassung nach mit diesen Massenmorden nicht in Verbindung gebracht werden, da insbesondere die Waffen-SS, die ich eigentlich gehabt habe, an diesen

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Exzessen nach meiner damaligen Kenntnis überhaupt nicht beteiligt war, und heute kann ich nur sagen, dass das Ausmass, in dem die Führung der Waffen-SS und die Organisation der Waffen-SS, daran beteiligt war, zahlenmässig zu der Gesamtheit der Waffen-SS in einem winzigen Verhältnis steht.

F: Himmler war der Führer der Waffen-SS?

A: Ja.

F: Er war das Vorbild von Glaube und Gehorsam nach seiner Meinung?

A: Nein. Himmler wurde als Person schon vor dem Kriege, aber während des Krieges in immer steigendem Masse von einer sehr grossen Anzahl der mir bekannten hohen SS-Führer, zum Teil in geringer zum Teil in stärkerer und zum Teil in sehr starker Form abgelehnt. Je genauer sie ihn kannten, desto schärfer lehnten sie ihn ab.

F: Haben Sie irgendetwas getan, um diese Massenmorde von ihm zu verhindern?

A: Ich bin gar nicht auf die Idee gekommen, etwas diesbezügliches zu tun, weil mir diese Massenmorde nicht bekannt waren.

F: Wussten Sie jemals von einem Widerstand der hohen SS-Führer gegen Himmler, gegen seine Ideale und gegen seine Taten, die sie ganz genau wussten?

A: Es gab selbstverständlich, wie ich vorhin schon sagte, eine in Grad unterschiedlichen Widerstand gegen Himmlers Ansichten und auch gegen Befehle, die er erliess. Da mit den Taten, wie ich annehme, die Massenmorde und die damit verwandten Dinge gemeint sind kann ich darüber nichts sagen, weil ich von diesen Taten nichts wusste.

F: Noch eine letzte Frage: Warum wurden die Rangverleihungen in der Waffen-SS an Führer der Nationalsozialisten verliehen? Was war der Grund dafür?

A: Der Grund für diese Rangverleihungen war der, dass diejenigen höheren SS-Führer oder überhaupt SS-Führer, die im Befehlsbereich Himmlers, der ja vollständig verschiedenartige Sparten umfasste, irgendeine militärische Aufgabe übernahmen, zur Lösung dieser Auf-

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gabe einen militärischen Rang benötigten, weil ihnen nach der Natur der Aufgabe Truppenteile oder Dienststellen des Heeres dauernd oder zeitweise unterstellt wurden und weil sie eben dann Vorgesetzte der Soldaten sein mussten.

F: Leute, wie Ribbentrop, z. B. hatten doch einen Rang in der SS

A: Der hatte, soviel ich weiss, einen Rang in der SS, aber nicht in der Waffen-SS. Es war also kein militärischer Rang.

F: Wer waren denn die Personen, die diese formelle Mitgliedschaft in der Waffen-SS bekamen?

A: Darf ich ein Beispiel nennen? Schellenberg übernahm im Jahre 1944, Ende 1944 glaube ich, die militärische Abwehr, die in der Dienststelle des OKW war. Dort wurden ihm militärische Kräfte der Wehrmacht unterstellt bei den Dienststellen der Wehrmacht. Aus diesem Grunde erhielt er selbst einen militärischen Rang, und da die einzige Möglichkeit in Himmlers Befehlsbereich ihm einen militärischen Rang zu geben, die war, ihm einen Rang in der Waffen-SS zu geben, wurde er Generalmajor der Waffen-SS, ohne dass die Organisation der Waffen-SS und das SS-Führungshauptamt auf seine Tätigkeit irgend einen Einfluss ausgeübt oder Einblick darin bekommen hätten. In diesem Zusammenhang muss ich noch sagen, dass die höheren SS-Führer sehr anstrebten, einen Rang in der Waffen-SS zu haben, weil ihnen dieser im deutschen Volk ein gutes Ansehen gab. Und so erhielt auch Kaltenbrunner, der ja Vorgesetzter von Schellenberg war, einen militärischen Rang in der Waffen-SS, weil die militärische Dienststelle der Abwehr mit Schellenberg ihm unterstand. Also gehörte auch Kaltenbrunner nur nominell der Waffen-SS an, aber die Organisation der Waffen-SS hatte deswegen auf seine Tätigkeit keinen Einfluss. Um ein Missverständnis zu vermeiden, muss ich darauf hinweisen, dass Kaltenbrunner kurz vor Schellenberg den Rang in der Waffen-SS erhielt. Der Grund kann nur darin gesehen werden, dass er sich persönlich nicht durch eine Bevorzugung Schellenbergs verletzt fühlen sollte.

F: Die Waffen-SS war doch die nationalsozialistische Elite der Armee?

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A: Die Waffen-SS war keine nationalsozialistische Garde. Sie wa eine militärische Elite. Das, was dazu gehört haben würde, sie zu einer Elite in politischer Hinsicht, im Sinne des Nationalsozialismus, zu machen, das fehlte ihr weitgehend von Anfang an und dieses Fehlen wurde während des Krieges durch die ungeheure Aufblähung der Waffen-SS nur immer grösser.

F: Die jungen Deutschen, die in die Waffen-SS eingezogen wurde waren stolz, in diese Elite zu kommen.

A: Das trifft zweifellos für diejenigen, zu, die der Waffen-SS wirklich freiwillig beigetreten sind. Aber diejenigen, die eingezogen wurden, waren oft sehr dagegen, in die Waffen-SS zu kommen. Und zwar ist das darauf zurückzuführen, dass das ganze deutsche Volk aus den Heeresberichten wusste, dass die Waffen-SS immer an den Brennpunkten des Kampfes eingesetzt wurde, und weil damit die ganz natürliche Schlussfolgerung verbunden wurde, dass die Verluste in der Waffen-SS sehr gross sein müssen.

F: Und die Moral und die Disziplin der Waffen-SS waren doch viel grösser, als in einer anderen Abteilung der deutschen Wehrmacht?

A: Nein, das will ich nicht sagen, denn das Heer hatte auch sehr gute Eliteverbände, die im wesentlichen nach denselben Prinzipien der Auswahl und der Freiwilligkeit, wie die Waffen-SS, zusammengestellt waren.

MR. ELWYN JONES: Ich habe keine weiteren Fragen.

VERTEIDIGER: Ich habe auch keine weiteren Fragen.

CAPT. TUBRINDY: Der Zeuge kann sich zurückziehen. Wir machen eine Pause von 10 Minuten.

Das Vorstehende ist eine wahre und richtige Niederschrift der Aussagen vom 29. Juni 1946.

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